

Point of View

Editorial

Depression Is Hardest On Us

Black Americans perceive the debate over whether we are in a depression as an irrelevant exercise in avoiding hard realities. Depression is a harsh and relentless fact of life in the underprivileged areas, and its cold tentacles have begun to ensnare working people and the middle-class, having disposed of the most impoverished.

For many, the abrupt and unprecedented turn of events has encouraged a sense of hopelessness, a feeling that things are going to get much worse before they get better — if indeed they do get better. We do not subscribe to the alarm and defeatism so often encountered today; we are convinced that Las Vegas and the County has the resources and creativity necessary to overcome current problems.

The prophets of defeat and gloom, however, will no doubt be proven accurate if the level of local leadership does not rise above its present mediocrity and timidity. And while the black community certainly did not create the problems we are mired in, it has a natural and fundamental leadership role to play in helping to determine how the community is to face the enormous consequences of economic deterioration, and to help formulate an aggressive,

thorough-going agenda of change. This agenda, it should be stressed, would require a considerable break from the thinking of the past. It would be more far-reaching than the limited response from the Great Society... their limited response to pervasive class and racial injustices. More to the point, it would not be a recognizably black program, but would instead embrace all those who need social change or the protection of government against consequences of a mismanaged economy.

It was not long ago when the basic goals of black people defined a national agenda of change. While this agenda was built around the specific and unique needs of minorities, it was relevant to all those who had been excluded from a share of the good things our society has generated. Today, of course, the destiny of blacks is much more intertwined with the future of the American society.

Blacks will not move ahead while the rest of the society is in a widespread decline. Our needs will only be served by a rapid and dramatic transformation of a society which results in a new and better social order that meets the needs of all who are in need.

R IOTERS

Rioters are made... not born

By Roosevelt Fitzgerald

Rioters are made, not born. They are made because of conditions which they feel are intolerable. Perhaps the most famous riot in American History was led by America's second group of militants. The first having been American Indians who rebelled at having their land and culture overrun by Europeans who began to arrive here, in large numbers, in 1492. The second group was the "Founding Fathers."

For years, the colonists had complained of the treatment they had received from the Monarchs of England. Their main grievance was "Taxation without Representation." Another had been that their industrial development had been hindered by Mercantile laws. They ultimately presented a list of those grievances to the Crown. They were ignored. Rioters destroyed private property during the Boston Tea Party and finally, during a rock throwing fracas which was accompanied by name calling, three

rioters were slain during what has become known as the Boston Massacre.

Word of this spread through the colonies like wildfire. Militants began collecting arms and making preparations for a confrontation.

They realized that the authorities would not take those events lightly. "One if by land, two if by sea" was a signal. It came and Paul Revere raced to rouse the radicals with reports of the reconnoitering redcoats. The rest is history.

Prior to the publication of the Kerner Commission Report of 1968, few were willing to venture a guess as to why racial riots take place. That publication articulated that which has been known by racial minorities for years. At the heart of the racial problem in the United States is racism.

Following a series of nearly 200 racial disturbances, occurring between 1963 and 1967, the Commission was formed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson. It was charged with addressing three questions: 1. What



Professor Fitzgerald

which the descendents of those Africans are perceived. Their adherence, historically, to existing laws has been interpreted as docility. Those with that perception justified it by the knowledge that they would not, themselves, sit still or tolerate similar treatment. It has been an age-old fear of oppressors that oppressors would ultimately seek to alter the conditions under which they live.

happened? 2. Why did it happen? 3. What can be done to prevent it from happening again?

The conditions for manifestation of racism created quite a phenomena swirl into furor. Some Americans proper justification as believed those results. They were, however, both warrants and demands. The conditions which prior acceptance of that data or those without bances are no exception. From the time of the arrival of Africans to the New World, against their collective will, the stage was set. The conditions they were forced to live under were justified, by their oppressors, under the guises of salvation and legality.

The conditions have remained partially exposed to these three questions: 1. What because of the manner in, (See Give, page 21)

Balanced Budgets Or Balanced Lives?

BY VERNON E. JORDAN, JR.

Balance the budget hysteria is sweeping the country. The Administration, which first submitted an austere budget amounting to a real decrease in social program spending, tore it up and came up with a newer, even more austere budget.

This one takes the hatchet to programs that primarily benefit poor people. Instead of giving the poor job programs,



JORDAN

It's all in the name of fighting inflation. But the budget doesn't fight inflation at all. You could travel the length and breadth of this nation and not come up with a single economist who believes a balanced budget will shave more than an insignificant fraction of a percentage point off the inflation rate.

A good part of the inflation rate is the result of OPEC increases for oil. The planned ten cent a gallon tax on gas will just force a few more poor

people off the roads while actually fueling inflation through higher gas prices.

It's too small to conserve energy and too big

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to do anything but harm poor people. If the Administration is serious about limiting gas imports it would impose a rationing system that allocated gas through transferable coupons and

put a firm lid on imports.

The rest of the balanced budget program is similarly concerned with symbols rather than substance. There's no

serious effort to get a handle on big ticket spending items. Defense spending is still scheduled to rise. But social programs and urban aid are slated to be trimmed. This is less an effort to balance the

budget than it is a move to pander to an electorate perceived as being fiscally conservative.

Everyone wants to eliminate budget deficits — so long as the other guy pays for it. The budget becomes a political instrument and the politically powerful get to keep their tax loopholes and favorite programs while the cities and the poor are cut.

For all the rhetoric about how we all must make sacrifices, the (See Why Must, page 23)